

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The attached listing of claims, including all amendments made herein, is intended to replace all prior listings of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A jewelry article comprising an annular ring made of a sintered hard material comprising a predominantly tungsten carbide material and a binder component, wherein the annular ring has an inner circumference and at least one external surface that is continuous and of a width sufficient to provide an external surface facet, with the facet having in a predetermined shape, has an inner surface, and has a polished grey mirror finish and with the hard material being long wearing and virtually indestructible during normal use of the jewelry article so that the facet retains its mirror finish, wherein a continuous portion of each of the inner and external surfaces is the facet extends concentrically and continuously around the circumference of the ring without variations in its width.

2. (Currently Amended) A jewelry article in the form of a finger ring comprising an annular body made of a sintered hard material comprising a predominantly tungsten carbide material, wherein the annular body has an inner circumference and at least one external surface that is continuous and of a width sufficient to provide an external surface facet, with the facet having a formed to a predetermined shape and polished to a grey mirror finish and with the hard material being long wearing and virtually indestructible during normal use of the jewelry article so that the facet retains its mirror finish which is in the form of a finger ring, wherein the annular body has an axis of symmetry and inner and outer circumferences and the at least one external surface includes:

a first frusto-conically shaped surface extending around the outer circumference of said body, and forming a first outer surface of said body proximate a first axial extremity thereof; and

a second frusto-conically shaped surface extending around the outer circumference of said body, and forming a second outer surface of said proximate a second axial extremity thereof opposite said first axial extremity, and the annular body further includes a cylindrically shaped exterior portion forming a third surface extending around the outer circumference of said body and being disposed between said first and second surfaces.

3. (Currently Amended) The jewelry article of claim 2, wherein said first and second surfaces having face angles within the range of from 1 to 40 degrees relative to the axis of symmetry of the body ~~and are formed and polished to a mirror finish.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The jewelry article of claim 2, wherein a portion of the third surface comprises a recessed slot that extends around the annular ring ~~is formed and polished to a mirror finish.~~

5. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 2, which further comprises a fourth frusto-conically shaped surface extending around the inner circumference of the body, and forming a first inner surface of said body proximate the first axial extremity, and a fifth frusto-conically shaped surface extending around the inner circumference of the body, and forming a second inner surface of said body proximate the second axial extremity.

6. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 5, wherein the fourth and fifth surfaces having face angles within the range of from 1 to 40 degrees relative to the axis of symmetry of the body and are formed and polished to a mirror finish.

7. (Original) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein the hard material comprises a sintered tungsten carbide containing at least 85 weight% tungsten carbide.

8. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein the at least one external surface is highly polished to a mirror luster that is maintained for life of the article and does not require re-polishing during use.

9. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein at least one additional external surface is present on the annular ring and comprises at least one or more different finishes to provide unique reflection characteristics to the article.

10. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein the ring includes a cavity of a predetermined size and shape that is configured to receive an insert of a decoration component that provides a substantially different visual effect to the article.

11. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 10, wherein the cavity is a slot, groove, or notch in a preselected location in the annular ring but that does not extend entirely through the ring, or a hole in a preselected location in the annular ring.

12. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 10, wherein the cavity is a continuous groove or slot which extends entirely around the annular ring but that does not extend entirely through the ring.

13. (Currently Amended) A jewelry article comprising an annular body made of a sintered hard material comprising a predominantly tungsten carbide material, wherein the annular body has at least one external surface that is continuous and of a width sufficient to provide an external surface facet, with the facet having a formed-to-a predetermined shape and polished grey mirror finish and with the hard material being long wearing and virtually indestructible during normal use of the jewelry article so that the facet retains its mirror finish, wherein the facet extends concentrically and continuously around the circumference of the ring without variations in its width, and wherein the body includes a cavity of a predetermined size and shape that is a continuous slot which extends entirely around the annular body and is configured to receive an insert of a decoration component that provides a substantially different visual effect to the article, and a decoration component present in the slot, wherein the decoration component comprises a precious metal that is disposed in the slot, which slot extends into the hard material, and the decoration component is mechanically fit with the hard material to hold the components of the jewelry article together.

14. (Original) The jewelry article of claim 10, further comprising an insert of a visually different hard material, a precious metal or a gemstone.

15. (Currently Amended) The jewelry article of claim 14, wherein the insert is pre-shaped to have a mating configuration with that of the cavity and forms an annular ring that has no variations in its width when disposed within the cavity, and is retained in the cavity by a mechanical fit or with a glue.

16. (Currently Amended) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein the annular ring comprises a finger ring wherein the inner circumference defines that includes an aperture configured and adapted dimensioned to receive a finger.

17. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein the annular ring includes design details that are maintained in their original configuration indefinitely.

18. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein the hard material consists essentially of sintered tungsten carbide and the annular ring is a finger ring that defines an aperture configured and dimensioned to receive a finger.

Claims 19-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Original) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein the hard material has a density of at least 13.3 g/cm³.

22. (Currently Amended) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein the at least one external surface facet is curved.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) The jewelry article of claim 7 [[claim 23]], wherein the binding material is present in an amount of 3 weight% to 13 weight%.

Claims 25-27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 2, wherein the cylindrically shaped exterior portion comprises a continuous groove or slot that extends into, and at least substantially around, the circumference of the annular ring and that is configured and adapted to receive an insert of an annularly-shaped precious metal decoration component that provides a different visual effect to the ring relative to the hard material.

29. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 28, wherein the groove or slot extends entirely around the annular ring.

30. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 28, wherein a surface of the cylindrically shaped exterior portion is coextensive with an outer surface of the annularly-shaped decoration component, and the surface is recessed from the external surface of annular ring.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Currently Amended) The jewelry article of claim 1 [[claim 31]], wherein the external surface is cylindrical.

33. (Currently Amended) The jewelry article of claim 1 [[claim 31]], wherein a portion of the external surface is rounded across a cross-section of the annular ring that is transverse to the concentric continuous portion.

34. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 33, wherein the annular ring has inner and outer circumferences and comprises:

a first rounded surface extending around the outer circumference of the annular ring that forms a first outer surface of the body proximate a first axial extremity thereof

a second rounded surface extending around the outer circumference of the annular ring that forms a second outer surface of the ring proximate a second axial extremity thereof which is opposite the first axial extremity, and

a cylindrically shaped exterior portion forming a third surface extending around the outer circumference of the ring and being disposed between the first and second rounded surfaces.

35. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 34, wherein the cylindrically shaped exterior portion comprises a continuous groove or slot that extends into, and at least substantially around, the circumference of the annular ring and that is configured and adapted to receive an insert of an annularly-shaped precious metal decoration component that provides a different visual effect to the ring relative to the hard material.

36. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 35, wherein the groove or slot extends entirely around the annular ring.

37. (Previously Presented) The jewelry article of claim 35, wherein a surface of the cylindrically shaped exterior portion is coextensive with an outer surface of the annularly-shaped decoration component, and the surface is recessed from the external surface of annular ring.

38. (Currently Amended) The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein the inner circumference has a surface and a portion of the inner and external surfaces are also parallel at the continuous and concentric portion.

39. (New) A finger ring comprising:
an annular ring made of a sintered hard material comprising predominantly tungsten carbide, wherein the annular ring has at least one external surface that is continuous and of a width sufficient to provide an external surface facet, with the facet having a polished grey mirror finish and with the hard material being long wearing and virtually indestructible during normal use of the jewelry article so that the facet retains its mirror finish, wherein the facet extends concentrically and continuously around the circumference of the ring without variations in its width, and wherein the annular ring includes a cavity of a predetermined size and shape that is a continuous slot which extends entirely around the annular body; and
a decoration component comprising a precious metal disposed in the slot to provide a substantially different visual effect to the article, wherein the decoration component has no variations in width and is mechanically fit with the hard material to hold the components of the jewelry article together.

40. (New) The finger ring of claim 39, further comprising a metal material disposed in the slot between a portion of the annular ring and the decoration component to facilitate retention of the decoration component therein.

41. (New) The finger ring of claim 39, further comprising a hardening-resin component disposed in the slot between a portion of the annular ring and the decoration component to facilitate retention of the decoration component therein.

42. (New) The finger ring of claim 39, wherein the decoration component forms a second annular ring in the cavity of the annular ring formed of the sintered hard material.

43. (New) The finger ring of claim 42, wherein the second annular ring has an outer circumference that is recessed from the at least one external surface of the sintered hard material so as to minimize contact of the second annular ring with any object contacting the jewelry ring.